

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Disaster can strike without warning, forcing you to go for days without basic necessities or to evacuate your home. Relief workers will be on the scene following a disaster, but may not be able to reach you immediately.

You need to be prepared. Knowing the steps to take during a disaster - whether flooding, earthquakes, wildfire, or another crisis – can greatly reduce the danger and distress your family may face. This information will help you and your family plan for an emergency, persevere during them and recover afterwards.

Creating a Basic Emergency Plan:

Having a plan is one of the most important steps you can take in disaster preparedness. Knowing what to do and how to do it can help your family manage disasters with less worry, fear and uncertainty.

- ❖ Decide what you and your family would do in each potential emergency situation.
- ❖ Draw a floor plan of your home showing escape routes.
- ❖ Choose a place away from your neighborhood where family members can meet in case you are separated and can return home due to a disaster.
- ❖ Identify a friend or relative who lives out of the area for family members to contact if you are separated.
- ❖ Post emergency numbers by every phone and teach children how and when to dial 911.
- ❖ Know how to shut off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches in your home.
- ❖ Plan how to help elderly or disabled neighbors in a disaster.
- ❖ Check that your insurance policies are up-to-date and provide good coverage.

Preparing a Disaster Supply Kit:

Having a disaster supply kit ready to take with you at a moment's notice ensures that you will have necessary supplies no matter how fast you may need to evacuate. Pack supplies in duffel bags or backpacks and keep them in a designated place. Your kit will also come in handy if you must take shelter in your home. This list will help ensure that your disaster supply kit includes all the essentials.

❖ Water:

- Pack at least one gallon per person per day for at least three days.
- Store water in tightly sealed, nonbreakable plastic, fiberglass or enamel-lined metal containers.
- Change your water every six months.

❖ Food:

- Pack enough food to last each family member at least three days.
- Include canned and boxed foods because they require little preparation and stay good for long periods of time. Remember to bring a manual can opener or to buy food in self-opening cans.

- Pack foods in sealed metal or plastic containers.
- Replace foods every six months.
- Include foods for infants and family members with special diets.
- ❖ **Tools and Equipment:**
 - Battery-powered radio
 - Flashlights
 - Spare batteries
 - Resealable plastic bags
 - Washcloths and towels
 - Paper cups and plates and plastic utensils
 - Toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant and other toiletries
 - Heavy-duty plastic garbage bags
 - Change of clothing and an extra pair of shoes and socks for each person
 - Blankets or a sleeping bag for each person
- ❖ **Personal Items:**
 - Personal identification
 - Copies of birth and marriage certificates, inventory of household goods, bank account numbers and other important documents
 - Maps
 - Extra car and house keys
 - Prescription medications

In case of Evacuation:

In a disaster situation, it may be necessary to evacuate your home for several days or longer. Because disasters can strike with little or no warning, you should be prepared to leave at a moment's notice. Knowing beforehand the steps to take in case of evacuation can make a big difference.

- Contact the local emergency management office to learn evacuation routes for your area.
- Determine where you will go if your community is evacuated.
- Discuss with your family the possibility of evacuation.
- Find out your child's school evacuation policy.
- Check that your disaster supply kit is assembled and ready to go.
- Make sure your car is filled up – fuel may be in short supply during a disaster.

When Authorities tell you to Evacuate:

- Bring your disaster supply kit.
- Wear sturdy shoes and clothing.
- Unplug home electronics.
- Lock the doors and windows.
- Turn off the main switches and valves for gas, water and electricity, if instructed.
- Inform a friend or relative of your route.
- Follow recommended evacuation routes. Watch for washed-out bridges, flooded areas and downed power lines.

Pets:

- Pets should not be left behind during a disaster, but do not risk your own safety attempting to find them if you must evacuate quickly.
- Attach ID tags to your pet with your name and address.
- Remember that most emergency shelters do not allow pets (except service animals).
- Make a list of pet shelters and of hotels that permit animals in the area you would evacuate to.
- Put together an emergency supply kit for your pet. Include things like a first aid kit, food dishes, a little box, a leash or pet carrier, medication, food, veterinary records and water.